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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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TRANSCRIPT OF DAILY BRIEFING
MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 1979
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MR. CARTER: Good afternoon.

The sign-up sheet for those correspondents who want to travel with Teng Xiaoping will be coming down tomorrow at 12:00 noon. Additionally, the Press Office is ready to take names of those journalists wishing to cover the visit of Teng Xiaoping. The deadline is noon, January 24. Therefore: Those who want to travel, the list comes down tomorrow; those who want to cover him generally here, we need their information for the credentials by January 24.

Q We're going to need special credentials?

A There will be special credentials. As a matter of fact, there is going to be one set for the travellers and one for the in-town folks --

MS. BADER: No. There will be one pass for the trip in its entirety. And we will provide it from the State Department. But even if you have State Department accreditation, you need the special pass to cover any part -- Washington or outside.

Q But those of us who've signed up to go on the trip don't have to sign up again for the in-town credentials?

MS. BADER: You have to sign up to get accredited.

Q We have to do both?

MS. BADER: Yes. Two separate processes.

MR. CARTER: That's what I meant by two.

Q White House accredition is not sufficient?

MS. BADER: White House is, but State Department is not.

Q If you have a White House pass, you don't have to get another thing?

MS. BADER: Yes, that is accurate.

Q Do you require a special pass of us to cover Teng at the State Department or other places around town?

MS. BADER: Yes, you need a trip pass -- a special pass. The only people who do not are people who have White House accreditation. All others need to get a special trip pass to cover everything, even the events in Washington.

MR. CARTER: That answers the question.

Q What is the deadline for that?

A January 24. Please contact Pat Lucy at 632-2492 until Friday, January 19. Beginning Monday, January 22, please call 632-1028 or 632-1029.

Q Do you now have an itinerary for it?

A The White House released that itinerary on Saturday afternoon, as I recall. That's when I was handed it.

Q I think it was Sunday.

A Well, then, it was printed up when I was over there Saturday afternoon. I was shown it. Anyway, it has been released.

A senior State Department official is going to be in here in about 20-25 minutes, just to do a little backgrounding on the Secretary's speech, which I hope will also be available by then.

Q That's this afternoon with the China bunch?

A The China speech.

Q On Iran. First, can you confirm the death of an American citizen by the name of Berkovitz?

A I can confirm that a man named Martin Berkovitz, an employee of Parsons-Jurden Company in Tehran, was killed in Kerman yesterday.

There have been at least three conflicting reports of how the death occurred. It was a homicide;

but as to the form of death, we are still seeking details. I would not be able to confirm that it took place in one of the two ways I've seen on the wires or any other possibility. He was killed, and that's about the best I can do right now.

I think there is some conversation going on right now with Tehran. We may have more information before I'm through with this briefing.

Q Where is this company located?

A The company, I said, of Tehran. He happened to be located with an affiliate of it --

Q But this is an American company, isn't it?

A As I understand it, yes.

Q Out of which city?

A There are two things I don't have: One, I don't have the home office of that company yet; and two, while I believe that the man is from San Francisco, I do not have that as a fact, you know, that I would wish to put the script on.

Q Can you confirm he is a retired Colonel from the US Air Force?

A I understand that that is correct.

Q (Inaudible)

A I don't know. You know, I know very little more than this.

Q Hodding, can you confirm that the Shah is coming here? And secondly, there is another report that the Queen's mother and some of his children are coming here today, or have left Tehran today. Are they are coming here?

A I think the place I'm going to have to be is that I do not have the travel plans, and won't be able to offer travel plans, for the Shah or the Shah's family. I'm afraid the best place to go for that is to the Shah and his family in Tehran. And for the next few days I appreciate your desire to know, but I will not be giving that out. I've seen several reports on the possibility of where the Shah may be going and when.

Q I can understand from a security point of view that you don't want to say exactly, but can you at least confirm that he's coming to the United States of America?

A No, I can't.

Q Hodding, in view of what happened to the Shah's mother last week, do you feel that you can guarantee security for the Shah, should he decide to come here?

A As we said before, we would, of course, welcome him if he wished to come here. Insofar as our ability or desire or willingness or intention to provide adequate security for any visitor to this country, the answer is that we would undertake to do it, and obviously would hope that there would be no repetition of the kind of events that occurred with the Queen Mother.

Q Can you tell us which agencies of the Government would have the primary responsibility for protecting the Shah? Would it be a detachment of Secret Service men? Is there any thought of troops being used?

A I don't have any contingency planning like that, and wouldn't be able to go into it.

Q Can you tell us who normally has the responsibility for protecting foreign visitors?

A It depends. For instance, State's SY often has a visiting foreign dignitary as their responsibility. Under certain circumstances, in connection with White House visits and the like, Secret Service has it. You obviously depend primarily on local law enforcement people to be the first line if somebody is going to be a long-term visitor in a place.

Q How long a term do you expect his visit to take?

A Well, to begin with, I don't have him coming here yet, so I can't really go with you very far on how long he's going to stay.

Q Do you know when he's leaving Tehran?

A I don't have anything to offer on his travel plans.

Q Hodding, there was a report today that a person describing himself as the public relations officer for the Shah has been making the rounds among Western correspondents in Tehran, saying first that the Shah is going to Egypt and then will continue to the United States; and secondly, that the Shah considers President Carter's human rights policy as the main cause for the upheavals in Iran -- that the President pressured the Shah to liberalize and that's why whatever happened has happened. Do you have any comment?

A I don't have any comment on either one.

Q Can you just comment on the general notion that the United States' human rights policy has something to do with the upheaval in Iran?

A I wouldn't accept that characterization at all. I say that as a spokesman for this Government.

Q Hodding, on a related subject. Do you know when Ambassador Zahedi is due back in the United States?

A No. I've seen reports that he was to have left, perhaps even yesterday. Where are you, Jill? Is he back?

MS. SCHUKER: Not yet. I think he is expected back today.

Q Some of us have been informed that a number of Embassy employees have decided not to let him back in the Embassy because of his involvement with the Shah. What is the State Department's position? Is he the only official representative, or is somebody else accredited? In other words, if the State Department has to choose between him and his apparent opponents inside the Embassy, what is the State Department's position?

A I think that the representative whom we recognize is the representative of the government that we recognize -- that is to say, if he is the appointee, the designee, as Ambassador to this country of the government, then that is who it is that we say is the Ambassador -- assuming we have relations with that nation, which we do.

Now, that's a general proposition. I am not now getting ready to say what I'm getting ready to say because I want to weasel out of that. I don't know any of the circumstances you are talking about. I am not aware of

the fact that there is any attempt to keep the Ambassador out. I am not aware of the small print on what our legal responsibilities are in this case. I can take a general question, if you'd like.

Q Would you please?

A OK. Tell me the question. How do you want it?

Q Well, is it the State Department's policy to automatically designate the Ambassador as representative of his government, even if opposed by members of the staff? And what, then, will the State Department do to aid this designated Ambassador should there be any conflict?

Q Particularly in terms of the Executive Protection Service.

A OK.

Q Could you help us understand what this Government's relationship is to Khomeini? Do we deal with him directly, indirectly? In what way? Where? Do we see his representatives in Iran? I could go on, but you get the thrust of it.

A I get the thrust of it. To the best of my knowledge, we've had no direct contact with Mr. Khomeini. As we have indicated, we have seen representatives of Mr. Khomeini, both in Iran and elsewhere. Insofar as a schedule for those meetings is concerned, I'm not going to be able to offer one, except to say I believe that they have been repeated and in the near, immediate past.

Marvin, I'm not sure where we went with the questions after that.

Q Well, I would like to know whether this Government would be prepared to deal with the cabinet that he has proposed over this past weekend?

A The Secretary last week spoke of our willingness and intention to cooperate with the Bakhtiar Government. I have nothing to add to that, nor to modify that, in terms of what we believe our next step is.

Q But there appears to be internally now an opposition government to the one you are recognizing. Do you ignore that opposition government?

A I think that for the moment, Marvin, what [illegible] to say is that, while we have noted Mr. [illegible]ini's remarks about certain possibilities about his [illegible]c Revolutionary Council and that sort of thing, I [illegible]no comment on his remarks -- which is, I would say [illegible]llows, a no comment on that council.

To repeat myself, the Secretary expressed this [illegible]mment's views on the return of civilian government [illegible] press conference last week, and our willingness [illegible]perate fully with it. That position has not [illegible]d.

Q Hodding, are some of these contacts with [illegible]ini's representatives taking place in the Paris [illegible] In other words, are these people in the immediate [illegible]around him in Paris?

A I'm not going to go into where the [illegible]ngs took place.

Q Can you rule out that, in dealing with [illegible]of the representatives, as you say you have been [illegible] and expect to continue to do, you in fact are [illegible]ng with some of the unidentified members of his [illegible]sional cabinet?

A I won't confirm or deny that.

Q But what I'm asking you is whether you [illegible]in fact, rule it out?

A I would neither confirm nor deny the iden-[illegible]of people that we've been talking to.

Q Hodding, expressing full support for [illegible]akhtiar Government, is it not implicitly denying [illegible]rt for any alternative?

A What we have in place, as a result so far [illegible]e constitutional process -- the Senate confirmation [illegible]e Government being the next-to-the-last step in [illegible]process -- is a government which is within a step [illegible]ing fully in place according to the constitutional [illegible]sses of the Iran Government, the constitution [illegible]f. Therefore, the only question that arises as far [illegible]cognition and cooperation is with that Government; [illegible]we have expressed the position on that, to which I [illegible]really nothing to add.

Q May I follow up on that? Is your [illegible]nition, then, of the Bakhtiar Government one that

is based upon sympathies with that particular government, or simply based on the pragmatic fact that that is the closest thing to a government that Iran has right now? And if, indeed, it were to be replaced next week, we would have to take pragmatic steps in that direction?

A Ted, I don't think I'm going to be able to go down that line of speculation with you -- as to what might happen if something happened in the future. The fact is, this is the government which has been established or is almost totally established through a process which we recognize; and we have offered to cooperate fully with it. Beyond that, I really can't go into what might or might not happen in the future.

Q In that case, forget the somewhat hypothetical second half of that question and just address the first half, if you would. Are you recognizing this Government simply because of the pragmatic considerations -- it's the closest thing to a government that you've got? Or is there also an element of US sympathy for this particular government?

A I don't think I can dissect the reasons for our support quite that neatly. I think the reasons why we believe we can cooperate with the Government have been stated, and the fact that we're going to has been stated. But I don't think I can assign relative weights to why this or that set of factors went into the overall assessment that we want to cooperate fully with the regime.

Q Can I ask an unrelated subject?

A No. Let me get through getting beat around on Iran for a while.

Q Khomeini spoke yesterday about support for him in the army. Do you know about such support? Are you aware of such support? From the Iranian army, I mean.

A I know. I've seen pictures and what have you, reports. I really am not going to be able to comment on his remarks, and I personally would not be able to cofirm the validity of a great deal of things that are said in that general area by Mr. Khomeini or others.

Q Have you any reaction to Bakhtiar's latest remarks that his Government would recognize the PLO and deal with it?

A No. I don't have any reaction.

Q Will you have a reaction to that?

A I doubt it.

Q Well, I mean, doesn't that imply a major shift by Iran away from whatever position they took on the Middle East conflict in general to one which you might consider less helpful?

A Roy, the problem about this, as I've said before, is that there is a succession of comments that are made by figures in the political process. I don't think that anything is particularly well served by me commenting on each of those comments. There is a great deal of pudding yet to come, including what governments will do as opposed to what people say they will do. And I'd prefer, and the Government would prefer, to restrain itself, hard as it may be in some quarters, until such time as we have some actions to comment on as opposed to anything else.

Q Do you have any feel about the ability of the Bakhtiar Government to survive, to ride out the storm that has prevailed in the nine days since the cabinet was formed?

A I don't have any prognosis to offer, no official interpretation of future possibilities. Just to repeat what the Secretary said, we are prepared to cooperate fully with that Government. I can't go beyond that.

Q Hodding, on the question of Soviet broadcasts into Iran, have you noticed in the past week any lessening, either in --

A I don't have an official answer on that, Marvin. I've seen the same reports of -- not even so much broadcasts, but press commentaries and the like. I think I'm going to have to take the question, unless, Jill, you know something that I don't. I'm going to have to take the question. I don't know what the volume has been over the last week.

Q Widening that just a little bit beyond the press comment, has the Soviet Union, in your judgment, taken any step in any area that you would consider not helpful at this point?

A You mean, aside from what I do know about, which is a Pravda statement, that is not helpful?

What you're asking is: Are there other actions about which I might have some comment?

Q Yes.

A I'll take the question.

Q Are there troop movements?

A I'm not aware of any troop movements.

Q Are there any infiltrations of agents by way of Afghanistan into Iran, as has been reported?

A We're not aware of those reports, or the validity of such reports.

Q In other words, you have nothing to say as far as the Soviet actions in Iran at this point are concerned -- that are not helpful?

A I have nothing new to offer except, again, to go back to the Pravda piece, which is clearly both erroneous and not helpful.

Q How long have there been contacts with Khomeini's representatives?

A For some time. I'm not sure how long, but for some time. I think we may have posted an answer to that at one point, and I can't remember how far, really. But it's been for some time.

Q Jacqueline Spier had a news conference this morning -- Leo Ryan's former Legislative Assistant -- and said that she feels this Government failed to adequately protect its nationals. She was not critical of Mr. McCoy. She was critical instead of what she called the bureaucratic system that prevented whatever the Consular Office was doing from properly getting back to State; and she felt that the treaty that this country has with Guyana did not in any way prevent the United States from doing more, nor does the issue of religious freedom -- because she felt that visits there confirmed the suspicions that that was not a purely religious community. Can you comment on that?

A I think there are two aspects here: First, the State Department -- I do not want to debate this issue. We are very sympathetic with both the feelings and the position of those who were very close

to the Congressman and to others who died at Jonestown. The fact is that there is going to be a comprehensive review in Congress of the actions of the United States Government in relation to the colony there and the events leading up to the tragedy and what we have done afterward.

It is also true that the State Department has undertaken a review of its procedures to see whether, in fact, there might not be some ways to deal with what we trust will never be a comparable situation but what might offer the potential for being a comparable situation. In the absence of that review and a report from that, I don't want to try to comment on it.

I would say finally that I don't think she has suggested anything new that we have not had to address before, from here or elsewhere. But I'm going to have to hold it.

Q She said she did have a meeting planned with Mr. Christopher. Is that accurate?

A I don't know, but I have no reason to think that he would refuse to see her. I will have to ask.

Q Could you tell us about Atherton's travel, please?

A The best I have on the plans are, one, that Mr. Atherton and Mr. Hansell are leaving for Israel later today, and will go on to Cairo at the end of the week.

Q Cairo or Aswan?

A My paper says Cairo.

Q Your announcement on Saturday, too; there had been conflicting reports.

A This is a new guidance, and I've still got Cairo.

They expect to return to Washington early next week. I don't have anything more precise for you on their travel plans.

Q Are they flying by commercial plane? Are they not prepared for a shuttle or anything like that?

A They have in the past been able to utilize courier planes if they had to. But they are going commercially, as I understand it.

Q Is there any chance of getting a backgrounder with them before they leave?

A I doubt it. I'm pretty sure not. I think the timing is against it, among other things.

Q How does President Carter's statement yesterday that the United States would be prepared to invite President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin back to Washington for another summit flow? In what context should we see that statement in light of the Atherton visit?

A Well, I think it follows sort of logically from the following: What we first hope is that, in this visit, we will be able to make considerable progress, if not total progress, on eliminating the remaining differences on the treaty text. I think the feeling thereafter is that we would hope the remaining political differences could be solved at a ministerial meeting. And then, as the President said, if that fails -- and I paraphrase here -- he would not hesitate to call another meeting to try to resolve this issue. But each step at a time. We would like to resolve the treaty differences, text difference, and would prefer, of course, to be able to finish the rest of the work at the ministerial level.

Q Hodding, to the best of my knowledge the President has been on record a couple of times as saying he didn't think a second Camp David was a very good idea. Could you tell us what in fact has happened to the diplomacy that would have made him change his mind?

A No. I don't think I can offer motives as to why --

Q Not motives. Just what has happened.

A I understand. What's happened, of course, is simply (1) that we have decided to approach the problem as we have, sending Atherton and Hansell out there; and (2) both sides have expressed their desire and willingness to complete the process, and we will, I think, probably want to give every assistance we can in doing that, given that willingness.

Q By raising the summit again, doesn't that tend to undercut all other preliminary efforts?

A No. I think that the way it was stated -- though I don't want to try to go behind the President and really won't -- it was the logical conclusion of the other work being done first.

Q But failing to be done.

A Well, actually being done. I don't think he would do it just to try to hash out at that level what is essentially a lot of technical problems with the treaty text itself.

Q Hodding, does the State Department favor the sale of Alaskan oil to Israel?

A The question, for me, is going to have to remain a conjectural one. One, we have not been asked for it; and two, the possible contingencies on what might be done if the Sinai agreement were triggered is for the moment going to have to remain as an internal government discussion. I'm not going to offer up contingency possibilities.

Let me just repeat, as a policy matter, that whatever is required to meet the commitments we have made, we will meet that commitment.

Q Not only is it part of a contingency plan, but is it part of a long-term arrangement beyond the five years that are agreed upon in the contingency plan?

A I don't know. I don't know how those discussions are going between Energy --

Q Will you take the question?

A No, I won't take the question, because I won't get an answer, and I don't want you to sit there and say "another one taken with no real answer." That one is not going to be answered.

Q Can you say, whether the preliminary work is now being done, in the event the Israelis should come to us in the next week or month and ask the United States to carry out its commitment?

A I would say ON BACKGROUND, certainly. END BACKGROUND.

Q Hodding, when you speak of making progress on the differences in the text through this Atherton-Hansell visit and then using a ministerial-

level meeting to try to resolve the political differences, are you making a distinction between the text and the letters that would be exchanged with the text? Or when you say "trying to resolve differences in the text," does that include the letters that would be exchanged with it?

A I think that the feeling is that the problems that arise on the treaty text itself are far more susceptible to solution by people sitting down and working at the level of Ambassador Atherton and Mr. Hansell; that the problems that arise from the more general tying together of this agreement with an attempt to resolve the West Bank and Gaza issues and a comprehensive peace treaty are ones which involve far more political questions than they do linguistic -- whether it be on letters on the side or anything else; and that that really has required more work at the ministerial level. But I don't think, at this point, I want to do by inadvertence what I don't intend to do purposefully -- and that is to get into how we're going to negotiate this. What we're trying to do is move the thing forward.

Q Hodding, just to follow up on this. In light of what has happened in Iran and the changes that are apt to take place in the whole Middle East, does the United States still stick to the goal that you have just expressed, almost rhetorically, matter-of-factly, about the comprehensive peace and the steps toward it? The entire concept, pre-Iran, still holds, post-Iran? Do I understand you correctly?

A I am aware of no changes in the particular approach to the problem which surrounds the relations of Israel and its neighbors.

Q A question about the Middle East. Going along the line of what Marvin said, in light of what happened in Iran, I understand that the State Department is going to issue a new edition of the human rights report at the end of this month. And I understand there is going to be a huge chapter about Iran and human rights in Iran. Are you reconsidering or editing this human rights report in light of what happened in Iran and in light of what is happening in the area now?

A The report is in the process of being written, as are all the other ones; and I have no idea of what's going into that process, except that it is an internal process.

Q Is it going to be submitted to the approval of Mr. Christopher?

A Virtually all the human rights country reports go through a process which involves both the Human Rights Bureau, the regional bureau, and a review at a higher level.

Q So, no changes are going to be made?

A I'm not going to try to speak to how the process is going to work. There are a number of other country reports. It is no secret to say that there are negotiating sessions that go into almost all of those.

Q Hodding, two things: Why was Harold Saunders left out of this visit? And how would you categorize the attitude toward the visit -- optimistic or pessimistic?

A I'm not going to try to characterize it. He wasn't left out. He has a great deal of work to do right here in his regional responsibilities.

Q It was not requested that he not come or something?

A No. There is nothing to be read into that whatsoever.

Q Have you got anything on Taiwan legislation?

A No. Let me take that question. I think I ought to have something, an exposition, on that whole question tomorrow for you.

Q Do you have anything to confirm Vietnamese claims that there have been border clashes with China?

A No.

Q Have you anything on the situation on the border?

A No, I don't have anything on that.

(Whereupon at 12:40 the daily briefing was concluded.)